

# How to help communities amid Los Angeles wildfires | Earth to Berkeley | [dailycal.org](http://dailycal.org)

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## Body

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Hundreds of thousands have been forced to evacuate in response to the recent surge in Southern California wildfires. Hearing from my friends whose homes have been destroyed or who must flee the health and environmental damage that the fires have created, I feel more aware than ever that the climate has reached a breaking point.

Rainfall in California has become increasingly erratic in the past decade, and droughts increasingly severe due to rising atmospheric temperatures. Knowing that drought is a primary cause of the Palisades, Eaton and Hughes fires, it's terrifying to witness how people are being pushed into a state of crisis because of global warming.

In this time of uncertainty, it's even more difficult to know how to help people. I've seen a hundred Instagram infographics and have been checking in on the news constantly, but it's still hard to identify and prioritize actionable tasks that will benefit victims of the fires. As a start, here are a few ways we can support each other through a natural disaster.

### Donate

Gathering essential items such as first aid, canned foods, masks, clothing and medicine helps provide direct relief to wildfire victims. Most organizations prefer donations in bulk, so if you only have a smaller amount of supplies yourself, try reaching out to other people in your community and donating together. Similarly, even small donations of money go a long way towards healthcare and repairing buildings and green spaces.

### Check in on your loved ones

Reaching out to your friends, family and loved ones is something that you are uniquely able to do and that can provide a much-needed mental health outlet during a turbulent time. If you're able to, offer a listening ear and emotional support in whichever way they need most.

### Spread awareness

We've all seen the news and caught increasingly concerning headlines, but it's important to build a more in-depth understanding of the natural disaster for yourself and others. Seek out local resources and information about the environmental causes of the wildfires and share your awareness with others. With more accurate background knowledge on wildfire damages, we can target these issues at their roots instead of after lives and livelihoods have been lost.

### Engage with policy decisions

The factors that spurred an event of such mass destruction aren't entirely random - instead, we've shaped our environment and community over hundreds of years, and we continue to do so today. For example, Altadena lacks sufficient water reservoirs to fight the fires because of delays in the California Water Commission's construction of reservoirs, which were meant to be built years ago under publicly approved Proposition One. Similarly, the government's focus on fire suppression rather than integrative fire management and the simultaneous lack of action in areas such as vegetation removal and firefighting funding point to a gap in awareness surrounding environmental policy decisions. By educating yourself about wildfire management in your area, you can identify risk factors before they snowball into full-on destruction.

As these crises continue to affect people across our state, it's more crucial than ever to support each other and fight to alleviate the impacts of climate change.

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